

## Meet Community Housing Intern Myia Batie

Reach Virginia welcomed Myia Batie to our team as a Community Housing Intern in October 2010. She's a 2008 graduate of Iowa State University with B.S. in Community and Regional Planning. While an undergrad, Batie worked as an intern with the Iowa City Housing Authority and as a research assistant on a study examining African American families throughout the U.S.

Her first year after graduation, she served as a case manager for Iowa disaster victims. Batie relocated to

Richmond in January 2010 and is currently pursuing a Master's in Urban and Regional Planning at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Myia's work with the REACH Virginia team includes helping with various administrative projects and assisting with the coordination of stakeholder trainings. Most recently she assisted with the "Revitalizing



Communities through Housing and Economic Development" training and the ongoing "Challenges of Community Design" trainings. Myia is also involved in the development of an interactive module related to the SPARC Multifamily program application. She regularly assists with data analysis pertaining to the use of VirginiaHousingSearch.com. ■

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## VHDA Financing Helps Glory Days Return for Roanoke's Revitalized Patrick Henry

Like the fabled phoenix, The Patrick Henry has risen from years of neglect and decay to re-assume the glory of its heyday. The adaptive reuse of the historic 125-room hotel, built in 1925, is the brainchild of Roanoke developer Ed Walker.

The Patrick Henry closed its doors in 2007 after being condemned for fire code non-compliance. A 2009 foreclosure for back taxes resulted in the property's purchase by Potomac Realty Capital of Boston for \$2 million. It was resold to Walker in October 2009. He has previously revitalized several of downtown Roanoke's historic buildings, including the former Grand Piano and Furniture building—known today as The Hancock.

Now transformed into a high-rise apartment building, The Patrick Henry features 132 one- and two-bedroom units that range from 400 to 1,000 square feet and rent from \$510 to \$1,290 a month. Forty of the apartments are rented to tenants who make less than or equal to 80 percent of area medium income (AMI), while 26 are rented to tenants making 80 to 120 percent AMI. The remaining 66 apartments can be

rented at prevailing market rates. Residents began moving in during August 2011.

As a mixed-use/mixed-income (MUMI) project, The Patrick Henry also includes lower floor commercial spaces that are

home to a variety of businesses, including a coffee shop, a restaurant and a local radio station.

The \$22.6 million renovation was financed using \$9.3 million in Historic tax credits, \$2 million in New Markets tax credits and \$9.5 million in VHDA MUMI financing. Additional financing included \$1.7 million in owner equity. Under our MUMI program a property must be primarily residential housing, combined

with commercial or non-housing space, and serve residents with varying income levels.

To read more about this property visit [vhda.com/casestudies](http://vhda.com/casestudies).

To learn more about programs to help your town or city transform neglected buildings into desirable residences and street-level businesses, please contact Costa Canavos. ■



## The Hipp Comes Back to Life as a Mixed-use Community

Stroll down Second Street in historic Jackson Ward, one of Richmond's most culturally rich neighborhoods, and it's impossible to miss the transformation along the block that's home to the revitalized entertainment venue known as The Hippodrome Theatre.

VHDA provided permanent financing for The Hipp Place, a recently completed mixed-use/mixed-income (MUMI) development that includes The Hippodrome Theatre — famous for hosting stars such as Bill 'Bojangles' Robinson and Ella Fitzgerald in the 1930s and 1940s.

Walker Row Partnership, Inc. creatively renovated the theater and its contiguous parcels, including the W.L. Taylor Mansion designed in 1907 by African-American architect John Lankford, into a walkable mixed-use community with 29 affordable apartments.

This innovative project contributes to the restoration of buildings with significant cultural and historic worth, while



providing contemporary workforce apartments in the City of Richmond.

To read more about this property, please visit [vhda.com/casestudies](http://vhda.com/casestudies).

To learn more about this property, please contact Monique Johnson. ■

## Historic School Transformed into Apartments for Downtown Hopewell



The original construction of the James E. Mallonee School, later known as Hopewell High School, began in 1924. Designed by the same architect who created Richmond's Byrd Theater, the Tudor Revival building had been vacant since 1988 when the School Board declared it surplus.

The City of Hopewell acquired the property in 2001 with plans to redevelop it. After deciding that converting the property into office space for city departments wasn't feasible, the city sold the old

school for \$1 to developers McCormack and Gaskin for a mixed-use development.

"The city saw a need to improve the rental housing stock for the residents of Hopewell," said VHDA Community Housing Officer Costa Canavos, explaining how the deal

came about. "And they recognized that this project not only would increase rental options, it would also bring one of the community's historic buildings back to life."

Today, this National Historic Place has been reborn as Hopewell Lofts and features 50 one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments, as well as a public area—converted from the former auditorium—that can be rented for a small fee.

As a historic tax credit project, parts of the building's original

architectural elements had to remain untouched. Thus the design of Hopewell Lofts includes the enormous schoolhouse windows, the butterscotch tiles in the hallways and the marble central staircase.

The project received \$3 million in historic tax credits. We contributed a \$1.7 million permanent loan using REACH Virginia MUMI funds at 4 percent with a requirement that 30 percent of the apartments be rented to tenants at 80 percent of AMI. The remaining loan balance is based on VHDA's prevailing taxable bond rate. First Market Bank provided the construction financing.

To read more about this property, please visit [vhda.com/casestudies](http://vhda.com/casestudies).

For additional information contact Costa Canavos. ■

## NOVA Collaborations Result in First Regional Housing Fair

Renters and homeowners across Virginia have experienced dramatic changes in the housing market over the past few years. To help Northern Virginia residents navigate this challenging environment, and explore both homeownership and rental housing options, VHDA helped organize and sponsor the 2011 Housing Opportunities Expo.

More than 600 Expo attendees participated in various free workshops throughout the day. Because of the region's diverse population, many of the workshops were offered in Spanish, Amharic, Vietnamese and Korean.

In addition to educational workshops, The Expo enabled attendees to receive information, in one location, from approximately 70 exhibitors in the fields of real estate, lending, housing counseling and legal services. These industry experts shared the latest news on affordable housing developments, rental and homeownership opportunities, financing options, credit counseling, community resources and home maintenance.

The Expo was hosted by the Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance in conjunction with the Cities of Alexandria and Falls Church, the Town of Herndon and the Counties of Arlington, Fairfax and Loudoun. This was the first time the six jurisdictions have worked collaboratively on a regional housing fair.

To learn more, please contact José Páiz. ■

## VHDA's Harvest Project Trains Faith-based Organizations

VHDA's partnership with faith-based organizations addresses local community housing needs, examines a range of housing options and helps develop action plans for affordable housing. As part of this partnership, we recently hosted a Transforming Your Community workshop for faith-based and community leaders from around Virginia.

This one-day training, held at our Virginia Housing Center, centered on a series of group exercises in which participants identify preferences for key community assets as a way to understand the challenges of modern community design and housing. Strategic issues included how to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of faith-based organizations, and the opportunities for neighborhood revitalization.

VHDA Reach Virginia team members Mike Hawkins, Toni Ostrowski and Monica Jefferson provided insight on how to encourage well-planned residential neighborhoods with a balance of rental units, home ownership opportunities and other valuable community assets. The workshop concluded with participant groups designing an "ideal" community

that encompasses all aspects of a viable neighborhood.

Participants indicated that this session increased their awareness about neighborhood revitalization by helping them understand the role faith-based leaders can play in encouraging sustainable communities.



VHDA Director of Community Housing Mike Hawkins gives faith-based and community leaders tips on how to develop action plans for affordable housing as part of REACH Virginia's "Transforming Your Community" workshop.

VHDA's Harvest Project is an initiative to engage faith-based organizations functioning as 501(c)(3) non-profit Community Development Corporations (CDC) (or organizations aspiring to obtain this designation) that own developable land, or are engaging in projects which can generate affordable housing opportunities.

For additional information contact Monica Jefferson. ■

## Key Partnerships Supporting Affordable and Workforce Housing in Northern Virginia

### Arlington

The Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing (APAH) has begun preservation renovation of Buchanan Gardens Apartments. Financed by VHDA, this 111-unit development is on the Columbia Pike Corridor and part of a major Arlington County revitalization effort to preserve significant numbers of the existing market-affordable housing stock.

VHDA recently made an allocation of 2011 Low-Income Housing Tax Credits to APAH for Arlington Mill Residences. This 122-unit apartment development preserves 10 percent of the units for households earning less than 40 percent of the area median income. The development also features an eight-apartment efficiency wing to provide permanent supportive housing for people with a history of homelessness.

AHC Inc. of Arlington County is currently completing The Jordan, 90 Low-Income Housing Tax Credit assisted affordable apartments in a new construction development in the Ballston area. Part of a 4.3 acre site, the mixed-use complex includes 27 market rate townhouses all within a three-block walk of the Ballston metro station. This makes it a true transit-oriented development.

### Alexandria

Work continues on a housing master plan for Alexandria. As a

part of this effort, we've awarded the City of Alexandria a Mixed-use/Mixed-income (MUMI) Planning Grant that concentrates on the Beaugard Corridor section of the city, adjacent to Arlington County's Columbia Pike Corridor. Planning grant funds will help develop an implementation strategy to create affordable apartments through preservation and new construction.



Artist's Rendering of Arlington Mill

A 2011 Low-Income Housing Tax Credit allocation was recently awarded to the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority for the next phase of the James Bland Redevelopment Project. Known as Old Town Commons, this third phase of a five-phase project is replacing obsolete public housing with 44 new affordable family units, financed by VHDA, and combining them with market rate townhouses, all within walking distance of a community center.

### Manassas

VHDA and REACH Virginia are proud of our long-time partnership with HomeAid of Northern Virginia, based in the City of Manassas. Non-profit HomeAid is the primary

charity of the Northern Virginia Building Industry Association. Its builder-members provide low-cost construction assistance to facilities that serve Northern Virginia's diverse homeless populations.

In an innovative approach, we recently financed a facility that not only serves area homeless individuals and families, but also houses the administrative offices of SERVE. SERVE is a subsidiary of Northern Virginia Family Services (NVFS). REACH Virginia and VHDA, as well as the City of Manassas, are major supporters of HomeAid and of its 10-year celebration project. The project is a 4000 square foot expansion of NVFS's existing facility that, when completed near the end of 2011, will provide 32 more beds and enable NVFS to serve more than 250 additional individuals annually.

### Region Forward Coalition

REACH Virginia is an active participant in the Region Forward Coalition announced earlier this year. Under the direction of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Region Forward is a vision for a more accessible, sustainable and livable National Capital Region. We join other state, local, business, non-profit and federal government officials working to implement this vision that includes significant emphasis on regional affordable and workforce housing.

To learn more about these and other Northern Virginia projects, please contact Michael Scheurer. ■

## Riverside Place Rehab Creates Greener Housing in Damascus

It all started in 1921, when community volunteers began hauling thousands of rocks from nearby Laurel Creek to build a 15-classroom school. In 1951 a new wing, also built from river rock, was added to the existing structure for grades 1-3. When Washington County decided to build several new schools in 1981, it closed some old ones, including the Damascus Rock School. After it closed, the school was converted into a 28-apartment building known as Riverside Place.

Today, the historic school has been transformed once again, this time into an EarthCraft™ compliant apartment complex. Extensive green renovations include geo-thermal heat pumps, energy-producing solar panels, and ENERGY STAR® appliances and windows.

Despite the extent of renovations and the decrease in apartments from 28 to 22, rents are expected



Riverside Square

to remain quite affordable. One-, two- and three-bedroom apartments will rent for \$325, \$385 and \$395, respectively. The developer expects increased rent costs to be more than offset by the reduction in resident utility bills.

The project was developed by People, Inc., one of Virginia's largest community action agencies, which serves Buchanan, Dickenson, Russell and Washington Counties and the city of Bristol. Financing was provided through a combination of low-income housing tax credits, a VHDA SPARC (Sponsoring Partnerships and Revitalizing Communities) multifamily rental loan, TCAP funds, Affordable Housing Program (AHP) funds from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta and DHCD HOME funds.

To learn more about Riverside Place or our SPARC loans, please contact Chris Hilbert. ■

## Courthouse Square Is Second MUMI Success Story for Lexington Developers

The First National Bank, built in 1902, is located on Main Street at the south end of Courthouse Square. It had been vacant for many years when Rockbridge County sold it to local developers Matt Gianniny and Bruce Schweizer. The two had previously received VHDA mixed-use/mixed-income (MUMI) financing to rehabilitate the Dutch Inn on Lexington's Washington Street, and planned to do the same with the historic 10,000 square foot bank building.

Exterior renovation included cleaning and repainting the brickwork, as well as repairing and rebuilding the original windows. The two upper floors are now divided into seven one-bedroom and two two-bedrooms apartments, all of which feature restored hardwood

floors. Affordable rents range from \$525 to \$975. The first-floor bank lobby is home to Hess & Co. Jewelers, a family-owned business established in 1884. Unobtrusive modern lighting and a contemporary color scheme complement the lobby's original marble-covered walls. Two massive vaults — one of which serves as a small conference room — are reminders of the building's financial pedigree.

REACH Virginia subsidy funds were blended with taxable bonds to provide a lower interest rate than the standard bond rate. Under



Courthouse Square

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For additional information contact Monique Johnson. ■

## Mercer Place Celebrates New Workforce Housing in Kilmarnock



On July 7, Partners for Lancaster County Schools Foundation celebrated the grand opening of Mercer Place, the organization's first multifamily housing development. Located in Kilmarnock, the 16-unit workforce housing apartment complex will be home to the area's teachers, nurses, law enforcement personnel and municipal employees.

"Our partnership with VHDA was a real key to the success of Mercer Place as a "first in Virginia" affordable housing initiative by a non-profit

for those in its community workforce. Today, it serves as a model which can be followed by other rural Virginia counties with similar affordable housing issues," said Bill Warren, president of Partners.

Partners is a non-profit organization established by the citizens of Lancaster County to serve as a vehicle to alleviate the community's critical shortage of affordable workforce housing. More than 50 percent of the county's teachers are forced to live outside the county due to the lack of affordable housing options.

The total development cost of Mercer Place was approximately \$1.9 million, which included \$1.3 million in VHDA permanent financing, with the balance covered by grants and donations received

by the foundation. VHDA's below-market interest rate translates into an affordable rent of \$625 monthly for the two-bedroom, two-bath apartments. Once all the apartments are rented, Partners expects the complex to sustain itself with rental payments without additional charitable donations.

"By helping us evaluate financing alternatives and then select a low interest rate SPARC-REACH loan, VHDA enabled Partners to complete Mercer Place as a self-sustaining project based only on the rents paid by its residents. The low interest rate loan helped us serve our rural community by providing attractive, affordable housing for the new teachers arriving for the 2011-2012 school year," said Warren.

For additional information contact Toni Ostrowski. ■

## 'Beating the Odds' Receives VHDA Financing

We recently financed a mixed-use building in downtown Richmond for a non-profit organization called "Beating the Odds." Beating the Odds provides rental housing for young adults aging out of the foster care system. The building, located on 2nd Street, houses the organization's offices on the first floor and provides three rental units for youth in the program and one unit for an on-site supervisor on the second floor.

The \$340,000 loan was made from our Sponsoring Partnerships and Revitalizing Communities (SPARC) program. The SPARC program is

supported by our REACH funds which are generated internally by VHDA to help finance multifamily rental developments that can assist in stabilizing communities.

A.J. and Michael Sanders, the Chesterfield County couple who run the independent living program, learned about VHDA financing through community outreach by our REACH Virginia team. Young adults in the program must work to keep their state benefits, and put at least 50 percent of their paychecks into savings so they'll have a nest egg when they leave.

"This is a true community service organization," said Bill Fuller, VHDA Senior Community Housing Officer for disability outreach. "Beating the Odds helps teens who need to live on their own—because they've aged out of the foster care system—but they're not yet prepared to leave the program. VHDA is happy to be able to help Beating the Odds encourage this group of vulnerable young people."

For more information, please contact Bill Fuller. ■

## VHDA Brings Resource and Capacity Building to Virginia's Planning Community

Revitalization presentations and workshops are part of VHDA's larger, Mixed-use/Mixed-income (MUMI) Planning Grants Initiative. This multi-faceted initiative includes planning grant and project financing as well as capacity building, which is especially critical for Virginia's planners who often are at the forefront of neighborhood revitalization efforts.

In July, the REACH Virginia team took capacity-building outreach to Virginia's planners, state and local government officials and others at the American Planning Association Virginia Chapter's 2011 Annual Conference with a presentation on "Measuring Housing Affordability: Tools and Techniques."

Also in July at the Virginia Association of Planning District Commissions (VAPDC) conference, Jerry Davis and Jim Baldwin, executive directors of the Northern Neck and Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commissions (PDCs), respectively, joined REACH Virginia team members in presenting, "PDC's as Players in Downtown Revitalization."

In September, the REACH Virginia team hosted a workshop entitled "Revitalizing Neighborhoods Through Housing and Economic Development".

To learn more about our revitalization workshops or our outreach to the planning community, please contact Bruce DeSimone. ■

## Boaz & Ruth, Inc. Partners with VHDA to Provide Multifamily Housing and More

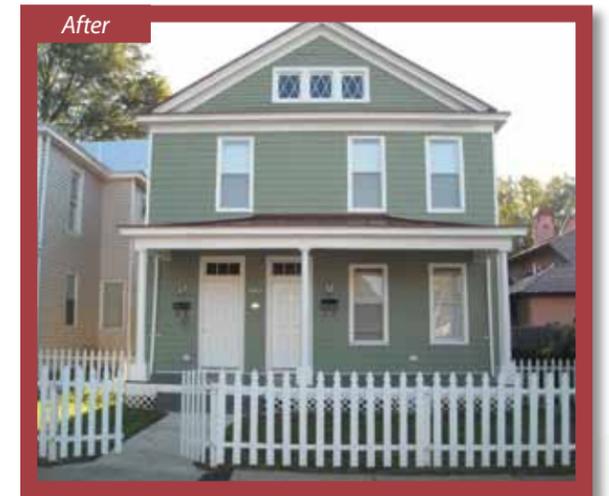
The Bible's Book of Ruth tells of a wealthy landowner, Boaz, who extended charity and dignity to an impoverished Ruth gleaning leftover grains from behind workers harvesting his crop. This is the context for Boaz and Ruth, Inc., (B&R) a faith-based, non-profit organization created in December 2002 to address the systemic problems of ex-offender recidivism. The non-profit is also the anchor for ongoing revitalization in Richmond's Highland Park neighborhood.

In late 2001, church and neighborhood leaders joined Martha Rollins, B&R founder and current President/CEO. Their vision was to create a used furniture store that would serve as a training center for ex-offenders. In addition to teaching valuable life/work and job skills, the store would be the foundation for related business ventures. Since then, six diverse business/training centers have been created, including Cathedral Construction.

Housing was needed for the growing number of ex-offenders joining B&R programs who otherwise could have become homeless. Donations, grants and interim loans enabled B&R to buy and transform four single family homes and two duplexes into 30 beds in the city of Richmond adjacent to the non-profit's six businesses. Cathedral Construction, with support from AmeriCorps

and the supervision of general contractors, provided much of this rehab work that empowered participants to learn trade skills while creating housing for themselves and other ex-offenders.

B&R applied to VHDA for permanent loan financing for these six properties. Because the organization had no experience in preparing multifamily loan applications, VHDA helped them build their capacity in this area. In addition, as the project progressed,



our construction inspector contributed his knowledge and our asset manager shared his property management experience.

This R&B project provided safe and affordable housing for ex-offenders, and the successful renovation of six properties in a neighborhood undergoing revitalization. VHDA is extremely pleased to participate with this inspirational and worthwhile vision.

For additional information contact Bruce DeSimone. ■